

this issue

Retirements **P.1**Department Name Change **P.1**Management Updates **P.2**HL7 Updates **P.2**Longevity Awards **P.2**Specimen Collection Updates **P.3**LRN-C Level 3 Update **P.4**

Congratulations to Patty Clark and Val Reed on Their Retirements!

The Bureau of Laboratories (BOL), with regret but warm wishes, announces the retirement of two invaluable employees -- Patricia (Patty) Clark and Valerie (Val) Reed. These two women have undertaken many roles and responsibilities over their combined total 52 years of service for the State of Michigan, and every facet of our laboratory operations has been improved because of their contributions.

Patty leaves us after 37 years, working first as a laboratory scientist in the Bacteriology Serology section, then as lead scientist and eventually unit manager of the Virology Serology laboratory. She also provided stability by taking on the role of interim Virology Section Manager for five non-consecutive years over an eight year period of turnover. For the past six years, Patty has been manager of a newly formed section, the Laboratory System Section (LSS), where she supervised personnel responsible for maintaining two laboratory information management systems for the Infectious Diseases & Chemistry Toxicology Divisions; along with overseeing outreach responsibilities, such as Bioterrorism & Chemical Terrorism Coordination, K-12 outreach activities, and antimicrobial susceptibility monitoring across the state. Patty will leave after accomplishing a huge Information Technology goal – readying the BOL for HL7 messaging and the move toward electronic medical records (including laboratory reports).

Val leaves the BOL after serving 15 years as the Bioterrorism (BT) Coordinator. She came to the laboratory after 22 years of employment as a clinical microbiologist at Regional Medical Laboratory in Battle Creek (now part of Bronson Health System). As the BT Coordinator, Val has trained hundreds of clinical microbiologists how to RROAR (Recognize, Rule Out And Refer) potential BT agents at the bench. She is perhaps best-known throughout the state for her packaging and shipping trainings, which have helped many laboratorians and nurses become proficient in the regulations and requirements for safe shipping of infectious substances. Val was (along with Patty) instrumental in establishing the BOL Continuity of Operations plan, fondly known as the COOP. Her coworkers recognize Val for her knowledge, integrity, sincerity, positivity and amicability. Val is someone management could always rely on in times of crisis.

Director,
Bureau of Laboratories
Sandip Shah, Ph.D.,
HCLD(ABB)

Department Merger and Name Change

Michigan Department of Community Health and Michigan Department of Human Services are now joined as the Department of Health and Human Services “MDHHS”. Our old MDCH identity will be replaced on our request forms, documents, webpages, laboratory reports, etc. We appreciate your patience as we make this transition, which will likely take a few months to complete. We want to call your attention to these two important changes:

Our webpage shortcut will become <http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs>

Our public email box will become mdhhs@mdhhs.michigan.gov





Management Updates

Marty Soehnlen, Ph.D., has been appointed Section Manager of Microbiology in the Bureau of Laboratories. Dr. Soehnlen began her laboratory career at Ohio State University where she received her BS in Medical Technology. Marty then travelled to the University of Michigan where she obtained her MPH in Hospital and Molecular Epidemiology with a sub-specialization in public health genetics. While at the University of Michigan her research focused on glaucoma genetics. Marty also worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an APHL/CDC Class XII Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) Fellow with the Rabies section. Dr. Soehnlen then chose to return for her Ph.D., this time to Pennsylvania State University studying Pathobiology. Her dissertation work was entitled “Molecular Characterization and Epidemiology of *Mycoplasma bovis*”. Dr. Soehnlen accepted a post-doctoral fellowship through the Oak Ridge Institutes of Science and Education (ORISE) which placed her in Landstuhl, Germany working alongside the U.S. Army. While in Germany, Dr. Soehnlen accepted a Dept. of the Army Civilian position as the Chief of the Microbiology & Molecular Biology Division and Deputy-Chief of the Veterinary Pathology Division of the US Army Public Health Command Region Europe. Following her 4 years living overseas Marty is very excited to have returned to the US and be working at the Bureau of Laboratories!

Please welcome Dr. Soehnlen in her new position which began April 27, 2015. Please feel free to contact her regarding any issues related to Microbiology laboratory testing. She can be reached at (517) 335-8064.

Also, effective Monday, May 18, Julie Kusey will serve as the Interim Manager for the Laboratory Systems Section, Bureau of Laboratories. For the past many years, as a Senior Specialist Microbiologist, she has served as a senior level scientist, leading a team assisting the bureau with day-to-day activities of the laboratory information management system (LIMS), StarLIMS. Beginning March 2010, she has served as the State LIMS expert, directing the overall operation of the Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) laboratory information system and the manipulation of test result data including writing and generating reports as required by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) programmatic activities. She also serves as the technical consultant and liaison for state and local laboratory personnel, MDHHS Bureau of Epidemiology and LIMS vendors.

Julie’s previously worked at Michigan State University - Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, as the Laboratory Supervisor over the Microbiology laboratory. Julie will assumes these new interim responsibilities until we have a permanent replacement. Please feel free to contact Julie for issues related to Laboratory Systems Section. She can be reached at (517) 335-9604.

HL7 Messaging Update

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Laboratories (MDHHS BOL) is initiating incoming and outgoing electronic HL7 messaging for test orders and results for both Newborn Screening (NBS) and other testing performed at the State Public Health Laboratory. The receipt of orders and results in near real-time is expected to improve patient health and reduce health care costs through early detection and intervention. This development of electronic messages that can transmit an order and return test results to the ordering provider will significantly reduce the burden on providers (eliminating the need for hand-written forms and filing of patient results), reduce the risk for transcription errors by both parties, and decrease time to when the patient result is available to the health care provider. The BOL is currently enrolling laboratories to pilot these projects. If your facility would like to participate in our pilot project, please contact Julie Kusey at kuseyj@michigan.gov.

MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories Longevity Awards

Marty (Martha) Boehme, MLS(ASCP)CM

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Laboratories (MDHHS BOL) would like to recognize the individuals listed below for their Years of Service.

Thank You!

	Years in Service
STEVEN CHURCH	30.0
DAVID SLABBEKOORN	25.0
ELSIE WILSON	25.0
ROBERT JACOBSON	25.0
STEPHEN DIETRICH	25.0
DANIEL FREEMAN	25.0
MITCHELL KOGUT	25.0
KEVIN RODEMAN	25.0
ANURADHA PATEL	20.0
LAURA MOSHER	20.0
BRUCE ROBESON	20.0
JAMES ARMELAGOS	20.0
THOMAS MAILAND	20.0
ANGIE SCHOOLEY	20.0
STEPHEN HASKELL	20.0
SCOTT FORSYTH	10.0
ANDREW HINMAN	5.0
STEPHANIE DAY	5.0

Specimen Collection Updates & Reminders

Matthew Bashore, BS

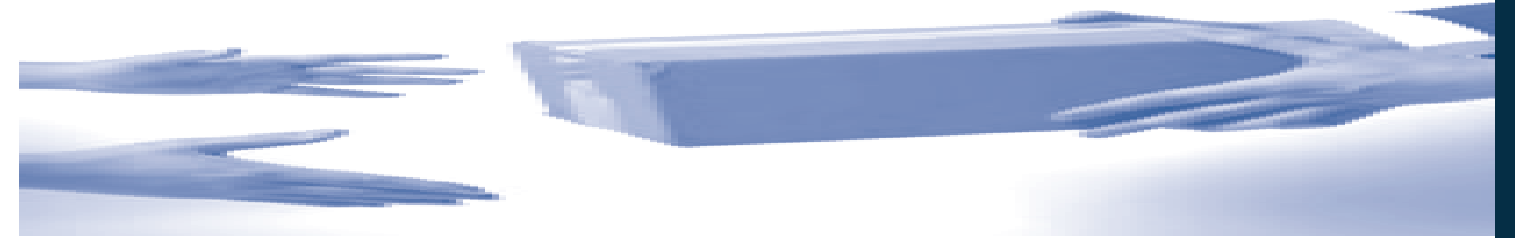
The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Laboratories (MDHHS BOL) maintains a high level of expected quality in regards to specimen submission from our clinical partners. Please note all specimen submission guidelines can be found on the laboratory website (www.michigan.gov/mdchlab - soon to be www.michigan.gov/mdhhslab). In response to growing concern over specimen receiving quality the Bureau will begin to supply a new 5 mL screw top tube for serum and CSF submissions instead of the 3 mL tubes that are currently provided. This change should dramatically decrease the number of leaking specimens received at the BOL increasing testing quality and improving safety for BOL staff. Please make note that only one 5 mL tube will be provided for all collection kits with the exception of the Hepatitis C collection kit. It is strongly encouraged that both tubes be used for Hepatitis C collection to ensure the quality of the molecular testing for Hepatitis C.

In addition to the changing of collection tubes, BOL is also examining alternatives to our current collection kit shipping units. BOL plans to slowly phase out many of our current shippers and begin using a different model that provides for a greater ease of use. The first kits to be affected by this change will be shipper for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing and all serum collection kits for Syphilis, HIV and all Hepatitis testing with the exception of Hepatitis C kits. These changes could begin as early as late summer to early fall 2015. The BOL is looking for agencies that are willing to pilot these new collection kits on a small scale and provide feedback regarding overall impressions of the new models.

Finally, the BOL is in the process of preparing a customer satisfaction survey that will be accompanying a cross section of collection kits. The survey will also be available online through QuestionPro at a later date. The purpose of this scan is to gauge opinions regarding use and ordering of collection kits, ease of specimen submission and level of knowledge regarding the specimen submission process with BOL. As always our relationship with our clinical partners is of utmost importance to BOL staff. We strongly encourage the use of this tool to help us fine tune our process to be more effective for our submitters. Please contact Matthew Bashore (bashorem@michigan.gov) or Martha Boehme (BoehmeM@michigan.gov) with any questions; or to volunteer as a pilot site for the new shipping units.

Changes to Clinical Specimen Return Service

In August 2014, MDHHS BOL (formerly MDCH BOL) changed to the United Parcel Service (UPS) ►



from the United States Postal Service (USPS) for the return service provided for influenza, HIV viral load, CD4/CD8, HIV genotyping and microbiology cultures sent to the Bureau of Laboratories. This change was made in an effort to provide a more reliable, efficient means of transportation for time sensitive clinical specimens. Historically, when these kits have been ordered from the Bureau of Laboratories, a USPS Express Mail return slip was included. Current kit order will now include UPS return service slips instead of the USPS Express Mail slips. These slips can be used at any UPS location, or by scheduling a pick up from a local UPS site.

Please note that if you have existing USPS Express Mail return service slips they should be destroyed at your earliest convenience. UPS return service slips can be ordered through the Bureau of Laboratories warehouse by contacting 517-335-9037. The UPS return service slips can only be used to send clinical specimens to the Bureau of Laboratories. The MDHHS BOL will cease providing funding to the account that supported the USPS Express Mail services in 2015. Failure to use the UPS return service slips could result in clinical specimens being returned to your location by the United States Postal Service.

Questions or concerns regarding this change should be directed to Matthew Bashore (bashorem@michigan.gov)

Reminder: Post Office Changes May Affect Patient Testing and Results

MDHHS clients who use the U.S. mail for shipping specimens or receiving their lab reports should expect significant delays in 2015 when planned changes in the U.S. postal service take effect.

Mail processing services are being regionalized as part of a plan that calls for closure or elimination of mail sorting facilities in Kalamazoo, Lansing, and Iron Mountain. As a result, single-piece First-Class mail may take a day or two longer to reach the destination city. Transit times will be longer for specimens sent by First-Class mail, and we encourage submitters to consider all options when submitting specimens, including other package services.

Several measures will be implemented at BOL in response to these changes, including specimen return service using the United Parcel Service (UPS) rather than USPS express mail service (see related article); new shipping containers; and a pilot contract with a courier system for higher volume clinical partners.

Remember to properly package all specimens with absorbent material in leak-proof and durable packaging that meets IATA and DOT regulatory requirements, even when transported by courier. ►

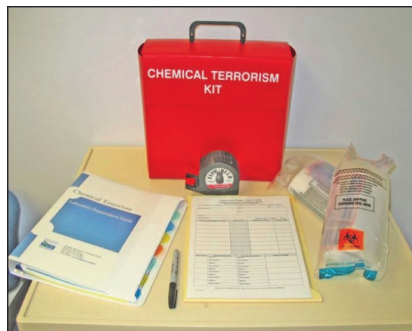
► Laboratory reports will take longer to reach clients who elect to receive their patients' results as printed hard copies. In order to most effectively address this issue, we strongly encourage all clients to sign up for our current secure fax reporting option or the recently implemented Electronic Test Ordering and Result (ETOR) system for infectious disease and trace metal testing. The Bureau of Laboratories is also in the process of implementing HL7 messaging for all BOL testing.

For more information on any of these options, please contact Matthew Bashore, MDCH DASH Unit supervisor at BashoreM@michigan.gov or Martha Boehme, Quality Assurance Section manager at BoehmeM@michigan.gov.

Laboratory Response Network-Chemical (LRN-C) Level 3 Activity Update

Teresa Miller, BS

In January 2015, a table top exercise was sent to all hospitals that received Chemical Threat Response Training since October 2013. A total of 42 hospitals volunteered to participate in the Chemical Threat Response Kit Location Exercise 2015. The exercise was a huge success! Participant laboratories completed the exercise with a score of 80% or greater than the targeted response. The Bureau of Laboratories will hold another exercise for



hospitals and public health departments that have received Chemical Threat Training in 2015. If your facility would like to participate in an exercise, please let us know.

Does your facility have this Chemical Terrorism (Response) Kit? If so, it needs to be updated and any healthcare professionals responsible for collecting, labeling, packaging, and shipping blood and/or urine specimens need additional Chemical Threat Response training.

Requirements for Chemical Threat Response have changed.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through their Cooperative Agreement with the Bureau of Laboratories, is offering a free kit update and Chemical Threat Response training addressing these changes. Attendees will be awarded 1 contact hour of continuing education units for successful completion of the program based on attendance, 80% pass rate on the test, and completion of a program evaluation. All personnel involved in collection, labeling, packaging, and shipping blood and/or urine specimens from persons exposed to chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals are strongly encouraged to complete this training.

We hope to hear from you. For more information call Teresa Miller at (517) 241-0925 or email at MillerT28@michigan.gov.



LabLink is published quarterly by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Laboratories, to provide laboratory information to Michigan health professionals and public health community.